Bombay and Shanghai on 13 December. 1991 in 'New Delhi. The Agreement came into force the date of its Signalsre

(b) Aeiing out of this. Agreement, the Chinese Cousulate General in Bombay was formaily inaugurated on Decmber, 7, 1992 and the Indian Consulate General in Shaaghai was formally inaugurated on January 16, 1993.

(c) and (d) Does not arise,

Defand kaskimr Campaign by INCA

2283. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU; Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state-

(a) whether the Indian National (Congress of America (INCA) has lately spearheaded a campaign named "Defend Kashmir campaign" in the US, in reply to recent Pakistani propaganda unleashed by Pak-Prime Minister, pointing out that most of the disturbances in Kashmir were attributable to Pakistan's deliberate instigations; and

(b) if so. what is Government's reaction thereto, by Way of lending support to the campaign by the INCA?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) and (b) The information is being collected and answer will be laid on the Table of the House at the earliest.

Kitniption front Visa Requirement

2089. SHRI SANJAY DALMIA- Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Govern ments of India and Pakistan had taken a joint decision to exempt curtain cate gories of people in both the countries from visa requirements for visiting each other's country;

(b) if so, what are the categories which have been so exempted and whether Members of Parliament have also been included in the said categories;

(c) whether Government propose to include the Members of Parliament in this category, if the reasons therefor;

(d) whether the said decision as at (a) above has already been implemented; and

(e) if not, what progress has been made in that direction?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L BHATIA): (a) to (2) The India-Pakistan Visa Agreement of 1974 does not exempt any category of people in both the countries from visa requirements for visiting each other's country. However, under the SAARC Visa Exemption Endorstment Facility which has been operational since March 1, 1992, Members of the National Parliaments. Judges of the Supreme Court and Heads of Centrally-alded National Academic Institutions, thair accompaning spouses and dtpeoden children below the age of 18 years are entitled to visa-free travel within the SAARC region after getting a visa exemption sticker affixed on their passports. The India-Pakistan Visa Agreement is being amended accordingly.

Assault on Indians living in Kuwait

2290. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a spurt in assaults and attacks on Indians living in Kuwait recently;

(b) whether it is also *a* fact that the so-called I. K. Human Rights movement held a seminar in support of Kashmir separatists there; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Gov-ernment thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTRARNAL] AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L BHATIA): (a) Some inci-denls of assau'it on Indian nationals in

Kuwait have come to notice in recent months.

(b) A group of 3 ladies and a male professor from POK falsely claiming to be from a charitable organisation raising funds for the benefit of people affected by deteriorating economic conditions in POX. entered Kuwait in February, but after entry 'hey claimed to be repr-ssa-i.atms of something cailed Kashmir Human Right Organisaf.ion. they used local platforms for conductig and India proraganda. The' groue has since left Kuvait.

(c) Our Ambassador in Kuwait has expressed our concern to Kuwaiti Fereign Ministry' at Pakistani. Embassy's oisure *Kuwaiti* organisations for and-l-v'ra propaganda. . .

Andher Pardesh visit to India

' 2291. SHRI G. PRATHAPPA REDDY: Will the Ministet of EXTERNAL.AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether, an Invitation has been; extended ,to the American President -Mr. Bill Cinton to visit India;

(b) if so, when was the invitation exten, ded;

(c) what is the response of the, American President on this invitation;

(d) if not by when the invitation will be extended and what are the reasons for the delay in extending the invitation; and

{e) by when is the American President likely to visit India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE 'MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise;

(c) Does not arise.

(d) Government will trasmit an invitation at "an appropriate time.

(e) Does not arise.

Requirement of Ration Cards for making Passports

2292. SHRI V. RAJESHWAR RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some Pass port officers have made it compulsory to submit the Ration Cards for purposes of the passports:

(b) if so, what will be the fate of those who do not have ratioh cards;

(c) whether any other proof of resideoce will be trea'ed as valid by sueh passport offcers-.

(d) whetier the names in the latest electoral rolls will also be a valid proof of residence, and ,

(e) what steps,are being taken to simplify the procedures for the issurance of passports?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI, R., L. BHATIA): (a) to (d) Applications for passports need to be accosnoao-ied by"dootanebtary evidence of proof of address. This could be a photoeopy of the applicant's itftiaafttuti or any other documentary avidence such' as the appointment let'er of a deputed company on letter head, water tax/telephone bill/electrieity bill, running bank account etc.

(e) Government have taken a number of steps to simplify procedures for the issue of passports including supply of forms through select post offices., availability of most miscellaneous services at any Passport Offices, delivery of first-time passports in person or by post, processing of applications on a first-eum-first served basis except in genuine amergencies, removal of erstwhile restriction on ravel to South Africa, issuance of a weekly pres-released by Passport Offices to indicate the application date being covered and streamlining of procedures with regard to lost./ damaged passports.